



**The National Native American  
Boarding School Healing Coalition**

P.O. Box 17247  
Boulder, CO 80301

1506 Broadway  
Boulder, CO 80302  
(303) 447-8760 Phone  
(303) 443-7776 Fax

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Gest Fellowship  
Haverford College Special Collections

Re: Recommendation for Paula Palmer

I am writing on behalf of the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition (NABS) to recommend Paula Palmer for a Gest Fellowship to research the role of the Quakers in initiating and implementing the United States' Indian boarding school policy. It is our understanding that Paula proposes to conduct research, guided by NABS Call for Papers, which specifically asks for Quakers to research the Quaker role, and roles of individual Quakers in initiating and implementing the boarding school policy. This process will create a model for research that other churches may follow. This is exactly the kind of research NABS hopes for in our attempt to begin to redress the wrongs and continuing harms caused in our communities from the policy.

NABS is a coalition of Native American individuals and organizations who have organized to secure healing and reconciliation for individuals and Native American communities who suffer from a century of human rights violations perpetrated in the boarding schools. NABS is in the process of gathering support to ask the Federal Government to conduct a comprehensive study of the boarding school policy and its effects, and establish a truth and reconciliation process, with paradigms for healing created or identified by tribal communities. NABS wants to tell the story that has never been told. The research the Gest Fellowship would support is critical to telling that story, in pressing Congress for action, and in moving toward the goal of healing and redress for harm done.

This research is urgently needed to begin to address the historical trauma from the boarding school policy that causes on-going harm in Native American communities, harm that extends well beyond individuals, to families and whole tribal communities, evidenced in a litany of suffering and grief. The United States used, conspired with, and paid religious groups, including Quakers, to carry out its boarding school policy, so it is right and necessary that the proposed research on Quaker involvement be done.

Paula is the right person to do this critical research for many reasons. Paula has immersed herself in learning about the Indian Boarding School policy and the Quaker role in it. She has created an experiential workshop called, *“Roots of Injustice, Seeds of Change: Toward Right Relationship with America’s Native Peoples”* that explores the history and effects of colonization in the United States. A significant part of the workshop and materials provided are about the boarding schools. Participants consistently engage on the topic of boarding schools. Paula has worked closely with members of NABS in offering the workshop and in the past year has partnered with a NABS Board member to bring the workshop to middle schools and Native American communities. This research is part of Paula’s work. The Gest Fellowship would give substance and impact to her work by allowing the in-depth research and writing needed on the Quaker role in the boarding school policy.

Most importantly, Paula has the proven ability to do this research and writing. She has lived her whole life working across many cultures for the cause of human rights, and writing about her experiences. She has worked extensively with Indigenous communities in Costa Rica, and has published several books that sensitively and skillfully record their stories. The script she wrote for her workshop powerfully and accurately captures 500 years of United States colonial history. She is a skilled writer and effective communicator. We count ourselves fortunate to have her in our community to help NABS tell the truth and move toward healing.

Finally, it is important that Paula not only does the research, but that she writes papers, attends conferences and does the outreach needed to share the story she learns and writes about. This is her intent. For all these reasons, NABS fully supports Paula’s application for the Gest Fellowship to do this work.

We are very pleased to be able to offer this letter in support of Paula.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "D. Lajimodiere". The signature is fluid and somewhat stylized, with a large loop at the end.

Dr. Denise Lajimodiere  
President of the Board  
National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition